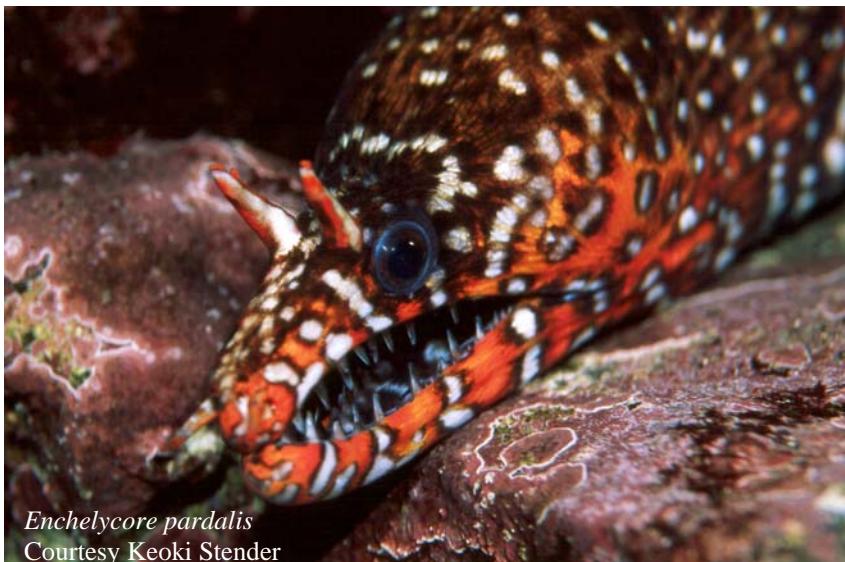


Marine Fishes

Eels

Muraenidae

Anarchias sp.
Enchelycore pardalis
Gymnothorax nuttingi
Gymnothorax polyspondylus
Gymnothorax steindachneri



Enchelycore pardalis
Courtesy Keoki Stender

Ophichthidae

Callechelys lutea
Ichthyapus platyrhynchus
Ophichthus fowleri
Ophichthus kualoa
Scolecenchelys phuioilo

Congridae

Acromycter alcocki
Bathycongrus aequorea
Gorgasia hawaiiensis

SPECIES STATUS:

IUCN Red List - Not considered
Endemic

SPECIES INFORMATION: Morays and snake eels (ophichthids) are carnivores of fishes and invertebrates. Morays are often nocturnal. Hawaiian garden eel (*Gorgasia*) is a planktivore. Other conger eels are largely nocturnal carnivores. Many moray eels are hermaphrodites of one form or another. The species common names and Hawaiian names are *Anarchias* sp. (no common name), *Enchelycore pardalis* (dragon eel, puhi-kauila), *Gymnothorax nuttingi* (Nutting's moray), *Gymnothorax polyspondylus* (many-vertebrate moray), *Gymnothorax steindachneri* (Steindachner's moray, puhi), *Callechelys lutea* (yellow-spotted snake eel, puhi), *Ichthyapus platyrhynchus* (no common name), *Ophichthus fowleri* (Fowler's snake eel), *Ophichthus kualoa* (no common name), *Scolecenchelys phuioilo* (no common name), *Acromycter alcocki* (no common

name), *Bathycongrus aequorea* (no common name), and *Gorgasia hawaiiensis* (Hawaiian garden eel, puhi).

DISTRIBUTION: The many-vertebrate moray has been found off O‘ahu only. Steindachner’s moray has been found from O‘ahu through the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI). Fowler’s snake eel occurs off Maui, Lāna‘i, and O‘ahu. *Ophichthus kualoa* is found from the island of Hawai‘i to O‘ahu. *Scolecenchelys puhiolio* is known from only two specimens from O‘ahu and Maro Reef. *Acromycter alcocki* has been collected from Maui to O‘ahu. *Bathycongrus* occurs from the island of Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i and maybe further northwest. Hawaiian garden eels occur from the island of Hawai‘i to O‘ahu. The other species occur throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

ABUNDANCE: The shallow water species are surveyed for in surveys of coral reef fishes in the Main and NWHI, both by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Division of Aquatic Resources and data are available online.

LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT: All species except Nutting’s moray, many-vertebrate moray, *Ophichthus kualoa*, *Scolecenchelys*, *Acromycter*, and *Bathycongrus* are found in shallow water. Nutting’s moray is found deeper than 110 meters (350 feet), the many-vertebrate moray was collected deeper than 180 meters (600 feet), and *Ophichthus kualoa* and *Scolecenchelys puhiolio* are collected only greater than 210 meters (700 feet) deep. *Acromycter* and *Bathycongrus* have been collected only deeper than 300 meters (1,000 feet). Steindachner’s moray is only found deeper than 30 meters (100 feet) in the main islands. Snake eels and Hawaiian garden eels occur in sandy habitat. The rest are found throughout coral reef habitats. Puhi-kauila (dragon eel) is more common in the NWHI.

THREATS:

- Puhi-kauila (dragon eel) and Hawaiian garden eels are prized by aquarists;
- Hawaiian garden eels may be threatened by habitat alteration.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: Commercial licenses are required for aquarium collectors. In addition to common statewide and marine conservation actions, specific actions include:

- Restoration of habitat;
- Maintain healthy populations with appropriate fishing regulations and education.

MONITORING:

- Continue to survey for populations and distribution in known and likely habitats.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- Improve understanding of factors affecting the species population size;
- Support aquaculture research to develop captive breeding for species used in the aquarium trade.

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